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*The Development of English Thought: A Study in the Economic Interpretation of History.* By SIMON N. PATTEN. Pp. xxvii, 415. Price, \$3.00. New York: The Macmillian Company, 1899.

If the term be taken in a general sense, Mr. Patten's "Development of English Thought" is a working out of a materialistic conception of history, although his "materialistic conception" is not nearly the same as that to which Marx and Engels gave a vogue in socialistic circles. It is needless to say that it is a marked advance over the somewhat crude form in which the great socialists left their fundamental concept. While they were content with an appeal to class interest and antagonism as a sufficient explanation of the control of cultural development through the economic situation, Mr. Patten's modern scientific animus leads him to look more closely into the causal relation between the economic situation and the resulting culture. The resulting theory is not a doctrine of a class struggle. In Mr. Patten's view the economic situation shapes culture by shaping human character and habits of thought. It does this somewhat directly, through a process of habituation as well as through a concomitant process of selection between habits and between different styles of temperament. The causal relation between the situation ("environment") and the cultural outcome, therefore, lies through the psychological development of the individuals who are exposed to this environment.

Some part of the theoretical ground on which this materialistic doctrine proceeds has already been set forth, in greater detail, in an earlier monograph on "The Theory of Social Forces." The elements of that theory are (1) a frankly and uncritically accepted, though modified, associational psychology, such as had general vogue until a generation ago, with its accompanying hedonism, and (2) a rationalistic doctrine of evolution, stated in terms of the consummation to which the development should tend in order to meet the author's ideal. It is part of the tacit premises of this doctrine that evolution means improvement, amelioration, progress; hence there is occasional reference to the "normal line" of development, and some phases of the development are spoken of as departures and detours from the normal. This resort to normality and a more or less constraining meliorative trend is scarcely a modern feature.

The normal line of development is conceived to run from an earlier "pain economy" to a subsequent "pleasure economy." This distinction, it may be remarked, seems to have no ground in fact and to serve no useful purpose. Under the regime of the archaic "pain economy,"

"fear and the avoidance of pain are the prominent motives for action. The sensory ideas are so grouped that they give early intimation of the presence of every possible foe or evil. . . . Man must have an instinctive fear of evil. The sensory and motor powers must unite in emphasizing any quality or person that may be the forerunner of suffering, or the means of avoiding it. Such activities and such a type of mind appear in primitive men, and wherever they are dominant a pain economy results" (p. 8).

Even a hasty and fragmentary comparison of this theory of primitive habits of life and thought with what is known of existing primitive communities will show its irrelevancy. It appears, for instance, that in such communities as those of the Australians, Bushmen or Eskimo, where life is precarious and the environment local, all this does not seem to hold. "Motor ideas" (to accept, without criticising, Mr. Patten's terminology) do not here crowd out "sensory ideas" to the extent which the theory would seem to demand; nor do these bearers of the lower culture bend their thoughts with utter consistency to the avoidance of pain. To some extent—in the case of many Australian tribes to a very great extent—they seem to court pain. Of these latter it is quite safe to say that there is more blood shed by them peacefully and deliberately, in self-torture and ceremonial scari-fication, than all that is lost in hostile encounter with men and beasts. Their times of peace are times of blood and wounds. Illustrations to the same effect abound in the accounts of other peoples at or near the same cultural level. And far from the "motor ideas" shutting out all other thought process than a strenuous application to the struggle against a refractory environment, there is on this cultural level a very large and free development of legends and ceremonial myths that have no obvious relation to "fear and the avoidance of pain." And the body of what passes for knowledge among these people is comprehensive and intricate, and shows no peculiarly close correlation with an effective avoidance of evils. "The sensory ideas are" not in any especial degree "so grouped that they give early intimation of the presence of every foe or evil." On the contrary, they are in great part so grouped as to be ineffective for that purpose. In point of fact, most of the known primitive communities are saddled with a stupendous fabric of magical conceits and ceremonials that frequently hinder their avoidance of patent evils. They are also, if the consensus of observers is to be accepted, notably indolent, light-hearted and careless of any evil that is not already upon them. *Dolce far niente* and merry-making, often hideously exuberant, claim a very large portion of their time and attention. It is behind the man on horseback that black care sits; the savage of the earlier, more unmitigated "pain economy" knows little of worry. And the evils which he seriously

seeks to avoid are for the most part figments—high-wrought complications of “sensory ideas” that are not controlled by relevant “motor ideas.” The evidence from ethnology seems to say that care and deliberation for the avoidance of evils find no place in the early culture until the necessity of taking thought is forced home upon the luckless by a successful incursion from without; and such an incursion commonly comes from men who seek an increase of pleasures through booty,—the “sensualists” of Mr. Patten’s nomenclature, that are bred in a “pleasure economy.”

The predilection for sharp antitheses and striking transitions that shows itself in the overdrawn contrast between a “pain economy” and a “pleasure economy” appears again in the repeated insistence on the epochal character of historical development. Mr. Patten finds that history proceeds by epochs, each of which begins with a transition to a new and novel environment and affords an entirely new and unprejudiced point of departure. The impression conveyed is that of an extreme segmentation of the sequence.

“Each succeeding environment will . . . create a new series of economic, aesthetic, moral, and religious ideas which will have their basis in the economic conditions of the epoch. The history of each epoch is thus practically independent, starting from its own conditions and developing in its own way. In studying an epoch, the economic conditions must be studied first, then the economic doctrines that flow from them, and last the aesthetic, moral, and religious ideas which the epoch produces.

“The different groups of ideas cannot be traced independently, because the ideas of each epoch do not grow out of the similar ideas of the preceding epoch, but are formed anew from the new conditions” (p. 44).

“History, to be valuable, must be studied in epochs, and each group of ideas [economic, aesthetic, moral, religious] be connected with its roots in the underlying conditions, and not with its antecedents in the same group. The blending of the old and the new groups of ideas happens after the new conditions have exerted their force, or at least have brought out what is most peculiar to them” (p. 45).

The notion of a sheer transition and a fresh start is mitigated rather than superseded by the subsequent statement that each succeeding temporary environment

“has given to the race certain characteristics that become a part of the national character. And thus character is the one enduring growing element in a civilization; all else when compared with it is temporary and fleeting”

for it remains true that

“in each new environment a new nation grows up almost as distinct from its predecessors as were the new nations of ancient times from the nations that preceded them” (p. 46-47).

That continuity of traditions and usages that has so impressed students of institutions and folklore, as well as that persistence of

physical type and temperamental bent that makes the burden of the teachings of the modern anthropologists, seem to have passed harmless over Mr. Patten.

The antecedents of English thought (ch. ii) are proximately racial, more remotely climatic; but the analysis is pushed back of the racial to the climatic with a freedom which indicates that in Mr. Patten's view the sequence covered by these terms is by no means a long one. The character of the race is created by an economic (climatic) situation which imposes certain traits upon men. These traits may be imposed by a relatively brief discipline, but after they have once been imposed they persist with an extreme tenacity. Further changes in the "character" of the race take place by the imposition of added traits, rather than by an organic change or selective variation of hereditary temperament or by an alteration in the individual's habits of thought. One gets the impression that traits are conceived to make up a mechanical aggregate, which is the race character, and to which new items may be added without essentially disturbing the previously existing aggregation (see pp. 4-21, 50-52, 57-66).

Mr. Patten's theoretical handling of the antecedents of English thought will be found at many points to traverse received notions of the primitive growth of culture, and his statements of fact in this connection also do not easily fit into the framework of the published accounts of existing primitive communities. Under the former head there is a characteristically bold departure from current notions as to the origin, nature, and functional relations of the clan (p. 109). Again, Mr. Patten says that "the northern man conquers nature, while the southern man yields to it" (pp. 5-8). An American reader will instinctively call to mind the Aleutian and Alaskan tribes on the one hand, and the Yucatanese and Mexican civilizations on the other, and the juxtaposition of the author's generalization with the specific facts leaves the effect of a drawn game.

"In wet, cold countries, natural forces act regularly, and the social surplus is small. Here men unite into strongly knit social groups, with a well-developed feeling of the solidarity of responsibility. Vigorous and aggressive, they react promptly against sources of pain" (p. 64).

This again calls up the Eskimo, the Fuegians, the Ainu, whose social groups are not seriously to be weighed in the balance of solidarity. And to make the bewilderment complete one might add the Haida, except for the fact that with them the food supply ("social surplus") was not scant, while their social groups were "strongly knit."

So again, in contrast,

"These concepts of peace and obedience do not come naturally to people living in hot, dry countries, where nature is arbitrary. . . . As their privations seem to be due to their own shortcomings, they develop readily the concept of sin and of a fallen nature. But peace they do not look for, and obedience they do not yield. On the contrary, they have inclinations toward a life of asceticism and individual freedom. Among these people there is no powerful priesthood and no concept of God except as a being to fear and avoid" (p. 63).

The Mexicans and Pueblos should afford illustration of this text, but credible accounts say that they do not altogether. The Pueblos, for instance, probably as clear a case as may be found, are currently held by students of their culture to be peaceable, obedient to their chosen authorities, not noticeably conscious of their own shortcoming, not perceptibly inclined to asceticism, with a priesthood constituting the strongest power among them, with an extensive and well-grown mythology and an intricate and elaborate cult, constantly resorting for comfort to their divinities, of whom they have but little fear.

This anthropological-economic verification of Mr. Patten's underlying principles of interpretation might be continued at considerable length without coming closer to a conviction of their adequacy. But all this touches only the preliminaries and premises of the discussion, not the main work of interpretation itself. It may seem gratuitous and ungraceful to apply these preliminary generalizations to the case of peoples that lie outside of that European culture with which alone his argument is occupied; but if the generalizations are to apply with such force as to afford a point of departure within the European culture they should be of such a consistency as to avoid the appearance of having been constructed *ad hoc*.

It is to be regretted that, even at points that are not peculiarly recondite or difficult, in the handling of the main question, faults of the same kind occur again. So, in the distinction made between his three typical civilizations, German, Semitic and Roman, Mr. Patten overlooks that difference of racial stocks that anthropologists make much of, and resorts instead to an unnecessarily bald appeal to the economic situation (p. 64). Similarly, the like persistent racial difference traceable between Catholics and Protestants, and in a less degree between Calvinists and Lutherans, is neglected at a later point (ch. ii, also pp. 110-142).

"The character of the early German was due mainly to the damp, cold climate in which he lived, and to the meagre food products upon which he subsisted" (p. 65).

The evidence of the German's food products being meagre is not easy to find; where evidence of the early dietary is most available, as, for instance, in the the case of the older Scandinavian communities,

it goes the other way. Nor does the statement (p. 66) that in Germany the equilibrium of population was maintained by pressing against nature for the means of subsistence comport with the other statement, on the same page, that "their migrations seem to have been actuated, not by starvation, but by greed." So also it seems paradoxical to say that the character of that Germanic stock that won its way by the sword "has few of the traits which war creates."

But paradox and the inversion of received views are not among the things which this book avoids. Wide divergence from the commonplace interpretations meets the reader at almost all points of first-rate consequence. At first one is struck with the novelty and force of the new formulations, and one has a feeling that Mr. Patten must have discovered and will unfold a wealth of evidence that shall substantiate the new positions taken. But with further progress this feeling (perhaps unwarrantably) wears off, as the proliferation of novel ideas and the paucity of documentation goes on. The matter-of-fact material handled in the body of the volume raises fewer questions of authenticity than the striking statements made in the hundred-odd pages of theoretical groundwork, but there are few portions of the book in the reading of which one quite escapes the apprehension that the facts cited are speaking under constraint. And Mr. Patten's handling of the theme is so flexuous and multiform, and to one not in entire sympathy with his premises and his point of view it seems at times so whimsical and inconsequent, that a detailed scrutiny of the argument would be a large and by no means attractive employment and could scarcely avoid the appearance of captiousness.

It is a book of which it is not easy to say much in the way of commendation that shall be specific enough to bear itemized statement. But none the less it will afford valuable suggestion and incentive, and, indeed, guidance, to the economic study of many features of European culture. It abounds in irrelevant generalizations, but there is also much of shrewd observation, with many new and cogent characterizations of the writers and tenets with which the book deals. We may not be able to accept Mr. Patten's position that antagonism to Puritan enthusiasm was the deciding motive and guide in Locke's work; nor may many students find conviction in the characterization of Darwin as a "philosopher on the downward curve," or of Hume as an economist changed into a philosopher. But the pointed contrast of Mr. Patten's views on these heads as against what has passed current will at least have a salutary effect in directing the attention of students to features in the development of thought which have commonly been passed over too lightly. The account given of the development of the English "home" and of the cultural causes and effects of the English

status of women does not seem conclusive, in view of the fact that a passably equivalent economic situation in other communities, where race, religion, or social traditions have been different, has not worked out like results. But here again the discussion throws an effective light upon the questions in hand, though it is perhaps to be rated as a side light. One is somewhat at a loss to account for the very high degree of efficacy imputed to the Christian religion—an intrusive cult—in Germanic and English culture, in a discussion whose first, if not sole, postulate is that the economic situation shapes the cultural sequence without help or hindrance from any outside spiritual force or from any antecedent tradition or tenet. And still, inconsistent as it may be, his handling of this intrusive cult as a formative element in English spiritual life is by no means the least effective of Mr. Patten's work.

On one point at least, of general bearing, Mr. Patten's conclusion seems blind to those who do not see all these matters through his eyes. In chapter iii (p. 188-189) and again in his concluding remarks (p. 378) it is broadly stated that the English have shown a conspicuous incapacity for the development of political institutions. This raises a question as to what may be meant by a capacity for political life—in that economic relation with which Mr. Patten is avowedly occupied—beyond such an adequate adjustment to their economic situation as Mr. Patten shows the English to be eminently possessed of.

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*Die Feldgemeinschaft in Russland. Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte und zur Kenntnis der gegenwärtigen wirtschaftlichen Lage des russischen Bauernstandes.* Von Wladimir Gr. Simkhowitsch. Pp. xv, 399. Jena: Fischer, 1898.

The work of Dr. Simkhowitsch coming as it does simultaneously with the news of another peasant famine in Russia, is very opportune indeed. This is the second work devoted to the subject of Russian agriculture which comes from a Russian student making his doctorate abroad. Like its predecessor ("The Economics of the Russian Village," by I. A. Hourvich, published as a doctor's dissertation by Columbia University), it aims at doing away with two erroneous notions which seem to have struck deep root in the minds of the foreign public. These are first, that the Russian village commune, the so-called "mir," with its supposed economic equality of the members composing it, is a myth; second, that the famines which have been succeeding one another with such remarkable regularity during the